

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

~~CLAIMS~~

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device, wherein both ends of one or two sheet-like materials are sewed using a chain stitch (intralooping stitch) with a single thread to form a tubular shape, and one or two thread ends at one or two sewing ends are suitably extended.
2. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein the tip part of the suture reinforcement material is sewed in a tapering manner or sewed into a bag-like shape.
3. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1 ~~or~~ 2, wherein at least one portion of the sheet-like material is made of at least one member selected from the group consisting of knitted materials, woven materials, nonwoven fabrics, and film, the at least one member being made of a biodegradable and bioabsorbable material.
4. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein the sheet-like material and a stretchable knitted material or woven material are stacked into a tubular shape.
5. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 ~~to~~ 4, wherein a projection is formed on the sewing end portion of the one or two sheet-like materials forming the tubular shape.
6. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 ~~to~~ 4, wherein extended thread ends at the sewing end are tied in a ring shape.

Int'l App. No. : PCT/JP2004/010566

Int'l Filing Date : July 16, 2004

7. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 to 4, wherein a stopper is passed through a loop on a side of the extended thread end, thereby preventing a thread from unraveling.

8. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 to 4, wherein the extended thread end is passed through an anterior loop continuous to the thread end, thereby preventing a thread from unraveling.

9. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 to 4, wherein a loop on a side of the sewing end is tied to a loop immediately before the loop, thereby preventing a thread from unraveling.

10. (Original) A method for manufacturing a tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device comprising:

sewing both ends of one or two sheet-like materials using a chain stitch (intralooping stitch) with a single thread to give a tubular suture reinforcement material, and

suitably extending one or two thread ends at one or two sewing ends.

11. (Currently amended) An automatic suturing device, comprising a cartridge containing staples and a frame equipped with a staple receiving slot, wherein a tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to ~~any one of~~ Claims 1 to 9 is fitted to the cartridge and/or the frame.

12. (New) A method for removing a lesion from an affected region of a patient, suturing said affected region with a tubular suture reinforcement material according to Claim 1

cutting off the lesion from normal tissue in the affected region

Int'l App. No. : PCT/JP2004/010566

Int'l Filing Date : July 16, 2004

removing said lesion along with a part of said suture reinforcement material, while leaving another part of said suture reinforcement material in the patient.

13. (New) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the affected region comprises a soft tissue.

14. (New) The method according to Claim 13, wherein the affected region comprises pulmonary tissue.